

PREFACE

To many a visitor to Burma, who views the country from the deck 101
of an Irrawaddy River steamer or from the window of a railway 121
carriage, there appears to be little difference between the Karen and
the Burman. This is not strange, for many individuals of the non-
Burman tribes wear the Burmese costume and speak the Burmese
language; and they present no markedly different characteristics
in feature or color of skin. I have often heard the remark that
"there is no difference between the Burman and the Karen." It is
doubtless because the Government of Burma recognizes that there
is a difference in the tribal characteristics, customs, and religion
that it has adopted the wise policy of publishing a series of complete
studies, of which this purports to be one, of these various peoples.
If the reader will have the patience to read these pages, it is hoped
that he will realize that, though the Karen have lived for genera-
tions in the closest proximity to the Burmese, they preserve their
own racial traits, which are quite distinct from those of their more
volatile neighbors with whom they have had little in common.

This work deals more particularly with the Sgaw branch of the 101
Karen people. My own acquaintance has been more intimate with
this tribe, though I have known many of the other groups. This
circumstance, together with the fact that the Bwe and Taungthu
peoples have already been described in the *Upper Burma Gazetteer*,
as well as the limitations of space, has led me to limit my discussion
to brief references to the other tribes. But I am convinced that in
the main the Sgaw exhibit the general characteristics that are truly
Karen in the broadest sense of the term. I have also omitted any
detailed study of the large mass of Karen folklore, which may
possibly be incorporated in some future study.

The reader may notice that I have used the term "Karen," in- 101
stead of the more usual plural form "Karens," when referring 104
to the tribal name. This is more accurate, for to add the "s" is
as misleading in this case as in that of the Lao, who are often mis-
takenly spoken of as the "Laos." In the transliteration of Karen
words I have followed the continental system of spelling, adopting
"x" for the guttural which is pronounced like the "ch" in the Scotch
"loch," and the diphthong "eu" for the sound which closely resembles

SECTION B

KAREN AND CHINESE

1. Introduction

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● [12] Having completed a review of the Tibeto-Burman kinship terminologies, the writer now proposes to discuss in summary fashion the salient points of the Karen and Chinese nomenclatures. Karen and Tibeto-Burman together constitute the western branch of the Sino-Tibetan stock, the eastern branch of which is represented by Chinese (Sinitic) and the Sinitic element in Thai. The term "Indo-Chinese" has been employed in a somewhat broader sense to include Thai itself, and the latter family is commonly coupled with Chinese in contrast to Tibeto-Burman. This view has been developed in a masterly study by Wulff and is shared by Maspero, a pioneer in Thai linguistics. The writer himself was originally partial toward this view, but more intensive investigations of the Thai languages have led to the conviction that a wholly distinct substratum is involved here, and that the Sinitic elements constitute little more than a veneer, albeit an ancient one. A rapprochement with Indonesian has been initiated, largely on the basis of a newly discovered linguistic group in southern China, northern Tonkin, and the island of Hainan. This newly recognized group, consisting of Kelao (southern China), Laqua (northern Tonkin), and Dai or Loi (Hainan), has been named "Kadai". Kadai is notable for its retention